

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 6.3 – Quality, scope and extent of supported employment services

Washington DSHS/DVR continues to provide supported employment services primarily to individuals with developmental disabilities and individuals with chronic mental illness. While supported employment service delivery to individuals with developmental disabilities is well established, there continue to be significant systemic challenges that must be overcome in order to improve the delivery of supported employment services to individuals with mental illness. In addition, further Washington State budget reductions in both the Developmental Disability and Mental Health service delivery systems continue to erode extended service availability. Other sources of long term support continue to be explored, such as “natural supports,” Social Security work incentives, peer support groups, and Wellness Recovery Action Plans.

Washington DSHS/DVR continues to recognize there are other individuals with most significant disabilities who require supported employment services besides those with developmental disabilities or mental illness, such as individuals with traumatic brain injury or other severe cognitive impairments. Longstanding systemic challenges within Washington State’s delivery of human services have prevented supported employment services from being provided extensively to these other populations because of inadequate resources for extended services or natural supports. These systemic challenges are being exacerbated by further reductions to the state budget in program areas that might otherwise offer supported employment extended services to these other populations. DSHS/DVR’s Employer Relations Administrator serves on the Statewide Traumatic Brain Injury Council as a general council and executive committee member and continues to explore opportunities for increased extended and natural supports for employment of people with a traumatic brain injury within the Council’s annual funding prioritization, public/private partnerships, and related brain injury support organizations.

Washington DSHS/DVR will continue seeking ways to expand the availability of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment by maintaining close collaboration with sister programs within the Department of Social and Health Services as well as local adult service providers. DSHS/DVR continues to work with various agencies to explore the option of becoming an Employment Network so they may utilize resources from Ticket-To-Work to provide extended services. This will be aimed at individuals who require supported employment but who traditionally have not had any source of extended services or natural supports.

Some customers who require extended services to support them in employment are limited to fewer work hours. A focus during FFY 2014 2015 will be to identify ways to maximize the number of hours an individual in supported employment may work.

In all cases where Washington DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services, the transition to extended services occurs within 18-months of the individual’s job placement (unless a longer period is necessary) at the point stable performance has been achieved on the job.